

The Bond

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by [Asharyn](#)

Summary

"Baby Ryuko"-AU. So ensues Nonon's chagrin when Satsuki becomes the guardian of a baby Matoi Ryuko.

Nothing was more surprising for me, and for everyone else who worked at the REVOCs headquarters, than the day Kiryuin Satsuki-sama walked through the ornate glass doors of the lobby with a baby strapped to her front. Gaze a firm, ice, sapphire, and gait as prominent as ever. As if the child harnessed just below her breasts wasn't even there at all.

No big deal. Just a kid catching a ride on the most important CEO in the entire world.

That was the mark of a different chapter in the history of REVOCs and my own relationship with Satsuki, in general. We had been close anyways, at least as close as a person could get to the human equivalent of a fiery sun. Someone who, even without their own knowing, was constantly at the center of everything.

But I was special to her. Always noticeable in the gift of important information shared, and the drop of honorifics. I was Nonon to her, while the others were Gamagoori, Sanageyama, and Inumuta. So it was no surprise that while she brushed the topic of her new guardianship off to others, it was openly shared with me.

Though just because that was the case, didn't mean I understood the implication of it. Nor her logic behind the situation. She explained it to me on a lazy afternoon, as we were sitting in her office. The regal light of the afternoon rays gleaming distractingly off the mirror-shined surface of her desk.

"Matoi Isshin was a professor I had studied under during the pursuit of my masters. Brilliant man, the greatest in his field," and even with the incessant gleam of the sun on Satsuki's desk I could still see her cradling the baby against her chest. The infant fast asleep in the crook of her arm. "Though it would seem that he left me as the sole guardian of his daughter, Matoi Ryuko, in his will. Professor Matoi passed this last weekend."

"I..." in those sorts of moments, finding the right words had never truly been my forte, "I'm sorry?"

The sentiment of a smile from Satsuki had been rare in the days before Ryuko's appearance. So when the slightest of curves graced the edges of her mouth it left me speechless. Worried that I had said the worst. All Satsuki did was shrug before standing from her seat. Pacing a distance away so that she stood with her back to me; her gaze angled down despite the view she could garner from her office window. The long silhouette of her shadow stretched out like a chasm in the room between us.

The truth was, at the time, I couldn't understand why Satsuki hadn't just refused her guardianship of Ryuko. It seemed heinous. Kiryuin Satsuki, a mother? Maybe in people's wildest dreams or fantasies. She belonged to her work. Lived, breathed, and ate the stuff. There were times I could find her in the office at five in the morning. Diligently typing away at a report or email, only to find out that she had never gone home the night before.

So it made no sense that she would accept the burden of a child so gracefully. Seamlessly incorporating the life of another into her own when it would've been just as easy to give the babe to her butler Soroi. Who I knew would've been overjoyed at the concept of caring for

another infant; the fact that Satsuki had essentially been self-sufficient since a child was something I was certain had left a gaping hole in his paternal desires. Though for all of it, Satsuki never budged once on the subject. Fully refusing even the most meager of help; personal baby day care be damned.

And if anything, the baby Ryuko only made Satsuki greater parts terrifying and awe-inspiring. Continuing to prove that she was utterly capable in both business and motherhood through seeming acts of belligerence. I'll still never be able to forget the first time she launched a business proposal with a laser pointer in one hand and Ryuko cradled in the other. Her uncanny aptitude for speeches entrancing the entire boardroom of business associates along with Ryuko. Who gazed up the entire time at Satsuki as if fully consumed by every word that left her mouth.

Though, for all the moments that Satsuki made it look easy, it was apparent to a select few that it was still a taxing role for her. There were more than a few occasions where I had meant to slip stealthily into her office to give her a report only to find her peacefully asleep at her desk. Ryuko tenderly held to her chest, as they both shared in a quiet afternoon. Absent Satsuki's typically meticulous desire to maintain a perfect schedule.

On those days I would be sure to shut the door extra soft and alert Satsuki's assistant that she would have to push back her afternoon meeting for a half hour. Important CEO business to attend too.

Though, the question continued to remain with me. Why did Kiryuin Satsuki keep Matoi Ryuko? A baby that wasn't even her own flesh and blood. The kin of a person she had never truly been that close too. Why would she assume a burden that could potentially hinder her performance and business?

We had ordered lunch from a place down the street. My treat that day, even went and got it. Returning with arms laden heavy with bags of take out to Satsuki's office. Her perch, of course, having had to be the topmost floor of the building.

Despite her typical third-sense ability to know when others were around, that day she seemed not to notice my struggle into her office. Fully enraptured by the playfully grasping fingers of the infant in her lap.

"You are a bundle of energy today," Satsuki offered up her hand. Letting Ryuko tug at her digits with unbridled eagerness. Her other fingers gently ruffling at the dark tuft of hair that had grown rampantly on Ryuko's head over the course of a few months. "What am I going to do with you, hm?"

Satsuki pulled away then, seeming to tease Ryuko into stretching her fingers and arms out towards her. Actively causing her to make grabby hands. "Mnah-! Mm- ma-ma!"

Time sort of seemed to ebb and cease, then. The moment caught in bright light as Satsuki seemingly realized the implications of the barely coherent word that Ryuko had managed to put together. I had figured she would shrug it off. Satsuki was too logical to believe that a baby could comprehend and understand the gravity of the blabber that came out of their own mouth.

“Ma- mmm- ma!” more grabby hands ensued and I watched as Satsuki leaned forward slightly. And even at a distance I could make out the singular tear that etched its way down her cheek.

“Hah,” she wiped it away before placing the gentlest of kisses to Ryuko’s tiny forehead. “That’s right. I’m your momma.”

The pieces seemed to fit together after that. See, animals have this thing called imprinting. Where younger ones come to realize that those around them are of importance. A figure to follow and be guided by. But after that day I realized it couldn’t possibly just be a one-way street. Trust has to be mutual; a caring relationship feeds together at both ends. And often times there are bonds that pass between any combination of living things that is just that much more important for whatever reason. Sometimes there’s just no reason at all.

There was an unspoken bond between Satsuki and Ryuko. One that I hadn’t been able to see at first. Something so unfathomably tight that not even Satsuki’s adamant will could resist it. And truthfully, it really wasn’t all that bad.

“Satsuki-sama, I’ve got those reports you-” with my arms full of documents I heard Satsuki speaking before being able to see that she was distracted.

“What should we do with this one, Ryuko?” I deposited the stack on her desk and watched as she conversed with a bubbly Ryuko. Her legs swinging haphazardly over the side of the desk as Satsuki held her steady at the waist. A paper held up so that both of them could see the almost mugshot-esque photo of an employee. “He has been quite insubordinate as of late. Your view on the matter?”

“Bwaaa!” one arm shot out, extending a pointer finger almost accusingly at the picture. Satsuki nodded her head firmly in approval.

“Terminate him it is, then. A fine choice.” she flicked the paper away from her, letting it slide the distance of her desk to where I stood.

“This the dude who was talking shit during the meeting today?” even if I asked, I already knew the answer. He’d been a complete jackass about the baby thing, complete with spreading rumors.

“Mm.” she nodded. Standing from her chair while grabbing Ryuko under the armpits. Satsuki gave her a playful jostle, only to be rewarded with a sharp squeal of delight that I cringed at. “Would you like the honors of giving him the bad news or should Ryuko?”

I couldn’t really help the venomous smirk that pulled at my lips. “Oh. Definitely have the baby do it.”

Satsuki was already halfway to her office door before she turned to briefly smile at me. “We’ll be back shortly, Nonon.”

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